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SUBJECT: EPR MEDIATION TALKS DISSOLVE

REF: 08 MEXICO 002426

Classified By: POLITICAL MINISTER COUNSELOR Charles V. Barclay REASON:
1.4 (b), (d).

¶1. (U) Summary. On 21 April, the Mediation Commission (COMED) that had the role of mediator for dialogue between the EPR and the Mexican Government formally removed itself from any future exchanges. The COMED was composed of civil society representatives that had been identified by the EPR last April. The COMED claimed that the government had not demonstrated a good faith effort in its investigation of two disappeared EPR members, Edmundo Reyes Amaya and Gabriel Alberto Cruz Sanchez. The GOM has requested the group return to reassume its role as mediator, but as of yet COMED has not indicated that it is prepared to reconsider its decision. The talks had succeeded in producing an effective cessation of EPR attacks on vulnerable targets of the variety seen in 2007 when the EPR twice attacked oil pipelines. While it is difficult to predict whether the EPR will launch new attacks, most experts agree the breakdown of the dialogue, however stilted, is a bad sign. End Summary.

¶2. (U) Last April 2008, the EPR used a communiqu  to identify several members of civil society to serve as mediators with the government in addressing its concerns about two missing EPR members. By all accounts, this group that came to be known as COMED relied on messages to interface with the EPR leading some to describe its role "artificial." At the same time, COMED had access to government officials but found itself frustrated with the government's inability or lack of will to provide information on its investigation of the disappearances of the EPR representatives.

¶3. (SBU) Some speculate the COMED could be bluffing in announcing its decision to give up its role as a mediator for any future dialogue between the GOM and EPR. Last August, COMED threatened to discontinue its role as a mediator out of frustration with what it viewed as a lack of cooperation and good faith on the government's part. Eventually, though, the group recommitted itself to prodding the government for greater transparency and progress in its investigation. In this instance, COMED could be similarly hoping its announced withdrawal from talks will prompt the government to recommit itself to a thorough and transparent investigation of the two disappeared members. The government has requested COMED reassume its role as mediator but to date COMED has not signaled a willingness to do so.

¶4. (C) Comment. While it is difficult to predict the EPR's next steps, most experts agree COMED's withdrawal from talks

is troubling. EPR's old guard is reportedly more disposed to talks; its younger members, however, are more radicalized and disposed to violence of the variety we saw in 2007. The government appears to have used the semblance of dialogue as a means to effectively forestall further violence over the last year. In exchange, it delivered little in the way of progress in its investigation of the missing EPR members. Many suspect the government has more information about these disappearances than it has shared. If it does, it clearly has taken a political decision not to act on this information. Now that "talks" have broken down, it is not unlikely the different branches of the EPR will enter into a debate over next steps, with undertaking new violent attacks up for consideration as one option.

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